

# California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program N E W S L E T T E R

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES UPDATE

October/November 1999

September 16 through November 15

## October SAC Meeting

On Thursday, October 21, 1999, a Stakeholders Advisory Consultants meeting took place at the California EMF Program offices at 1515 Clay Street, Oakland. The topics discussed at this meeting included:

- California EMF Program budget
- proposed outline for a combined Policy Integration and Final Program Report
- timelines for major research projects: Risk Evaluation Guidelines, Risk Evaluation, and Policy Projects
- program policy on ex parte communications
- letter to the Program from the California Public Utilities Commission responding to the series of letters sent to them about the Program earlier this year
- status of the Program's report to the CPUC

SAC members also voted to recommend a replacement Exposure Assessment representative for the Scientific Advisory Panel (see newsletter item below). Detailed information about this meeting will be in the meeting minutes, which will be distributed in the next regular program mailing. There is also some discussion of these subjects in other items in this newsletter, below.

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### Change in Core SAC representative from the American Academy of Pediatrics

Alvaro Garza, core SAC member representing the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) since summer 1998, has accepted a position with the California Department of Health Services and so is resigning from the SAC. Mark Miller, a former AAP representative to the SAC, has left his position with CDHS and will rejoin the SAC in Dr. Garza's place.

We very much appreciate Alvaro Garza's participation in the SAC over the last 18 months, and wish him well in his new position. We welcome Mark Miller back.

### Scientific Advisory Panel Replacement Member

At the SAC meeting on October 21, 1999, the SAC members voted to elect the newest member of the SAP, filling the exposure assessment specialist seat left vacant by Robert Spear's resignation. Based on the SAC vote, Thomas McKone will be the new member of the SAP. Dr. McKone is Adjunct Professor at the U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health and a staff scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

### CPUC Response to Letter from Some Utility Representatives

On October 15, 1999, the Executive Director of the California Public Utilities Commission sent a letter to Raymond Neutra responding to the letter of complaint sent to the CPUC by several utility companies in March of this year. The letter was generally supportive of the Program's current direction and management, and made several recommendations to help the California Department of Health Services and the CPUC ensure a fair and open process throughout the remainder of the program. The Program was already in compliance with many of these recommendations, which were for the Program to:

- provide monthly progress reports to the CPUC Energy Division, SAC members, and other stakeholders
- provide the Energy Division with descriptions of the processes for reviewing and finalizing each program product
- provide the Energy Division, SAC members, and other stakeholders with time schedules for completing all work products; these schedules should include the major milestones

- provide the Energy Division with descriptions of each project and the final work products that the PUC will receive at the Program's end

The program already produces a regular progress report, in the form of this newsletter, and has shared process descriptions and timelines for the major research projects with the CPUC and our stakeholders. We expect to complete the remaining materials and share them with the PUC by the end of November, as required in this letter.

### Ex Parte Communications

At the October 21, 1999, SAC meeting, several stakeholders expressed concerns about the possibility of *ex parte* contacts between stakeholders and DHS decision-makers. In response to this discussion, Gordon Miller is sending a letter to the DHS Director Diana Bonta' requesting that she and other political appointees in leadership positions at DHS refrain from meeting with California EMF Program stakeholders to discuss issues related to the program.

Stakeholders should also continue to abide by the policy on *ex parte* contacts that they agreed to in March 1997, that stakeholders or groups of stakeholders involved in the California EMF Program shall inform program staff and other SAC members by letter of any meetings they have with CDHS decision-makers. Such letters should include the time and place of the meeting, the issues discussed, and any agreement that was reached (see SAC meeting minutes, March 20, 1997).

Also in response to stakeholder and staff concerns about possible *ex parte* contacts between stakeholders and members of the program's Science Advisory Panel (SAP), the program is sending letters to the SAP members requesting them to avoid discussing issues related to the program with stakeholders, and to inform the program immediately if they are contacted directly by a person with an interest in this issue. Please note that as part of the review process for the projects with which they are involved, the SAP will receive the written comments from the public and stakeholders submitted during the official comment periods.

Stakeholders should avoid contacting members of the Science Advisory Panel. As previously announced, during the scheduled periods before the SAP votes on each project stakeholders may send letters to the California EMF Program that we will forward to the SAP members.

### Financial Updates to SAC Core

In response to stakeholder comment at our meeting on October 21, 1999, we will be adding an insert to the newsletters sent to *core stakeholders only* that includes current timeline, financial and budget material. We will send these inserts quarterly starting in January 2000.

### Research Unit Progress

**Risk Evaluation Guidelines:** Staff completed the revision of the draft based on the numerous public comments we received. We have also prepared a detailed response to each comment explaining if it was implemented and, if not, why not.

**School Policy Analysis:** Keith Florig has just returned from an extended business trip to China and has resumed work on the model and draft narrative for statewide policy-makers. Progress on the Local Briefing Document for school decision-makers has been delayed by other demands on Asher Sheppard's time. Because of this, staff removed the briefing document from this project and will complete it as part of the Policy Integration project. This will allow the contractors to finish the statewide policy analysis draft by the end of this year, and will avoid duplication of effort between the local briefing document and other materials that staff would have prepared anyway, such as non-technical project summaries and fact sheets. To help complete this document, we will contract with companies that have experience with school level EMF management, possibly including Enertech and Karl Riley's EMF Magnetic Surveys, to provide case histories of satisfactory and unsatisfactory approaches to EMF issues in individual schools.

**Power Grid/Land Use Policy Analysis:** During the public comment period on the draft report, staff held two workshops. In one, stakeholders and the public had an opportunity to ask questions about the draft and to experiment with the computer models, while the other focussed on environmental justice and community issues in the Power Grid Project. Staff also met with the contractor to map the general direction of the draft revision.

Before the comment period ended in early November, many people chose to submit extensive written comments on the draft materials. We have organized the comments that we received by the final deadline of noon on November 10 and are addressing them systematically to integrate them into the final product as appropriate. We

greatly appreciate the dedication of everyone that participated in the workshops or provided written comments on the draft materials.

Once staff have summarized the comments and prepared materials for the peer reviewers, we will schedule a telephone conference to discuss them with the SAC. We will announce the details of this conference when they are available.

**Epidemiology Workshop:** Staff are continuing to edit the discussions from January's workshop. Two more papers and their discussions have been sent to the journal *Bioelectromagnetics*, where they will be published when all related materials are completed.

**Prospective Miscarriage Study:** De-Kun Li and his team are now analyzing the data and have already produced some very preliminary results. An interim report with only the basic analysis is expected by the end of January. The final report is expected by November 2000.

**School Exposure Assessment Survey:** We are currently discussing with the engineering consultants a common scope of work, timeline, and budget to benchmark the power line mitigation costs used in this project.

**California Exposure Analysis:** No further work on this project is anticipated, except possibly as it may be required to help in the Risk Evaluation.

**Occupational Exposure Study:** Work on the data analysis and validation of the survey questionnaire continues. A draft final report is expected by end January 2000.

**Policy Integration:** An outline of this project, which will be part of the final report of the whole EMF Program to the CPUC, has been discussed with the SAC and revised in the light of their comments.

**Risk Evaluation:** A meeting was held with a number of DHS epidemiologists and toxicologists selected to assist EMF staff in evaluating the literature. The evaluation is now underway. Several contractors are working on literature reviews as background to this project. One of these, Claire Sherman, has submitted her review of brain tumors and other cancers and has almost completed her review of childhood leukemia.

**EMF Program Library:** Work to include current relevant publications continues.

and the California Department of Health Services

## Education and Technical Assistance Unit Updates

**Meetings and Workshops:** Education Unit staff dedicated much of the month of October to preparing for the October 21, 1999, SAC meeting and subsequent workshops on the Power Grid Policy Project. The Education Unit prepared the SAC meeting agenda with input from other EMF staff and the SAC Chairperson Gordon Miller, and coordinated the mailing of the pre-meeting materials to our stakeholders and interested parties. Education Unit staff also developed announcements and flyers to inform members of the public of the SAC meeting and Power Grid Project workshops. This unit also took the lead in organizing the Community and Environmental Justice workshop that took place on November 3, 1999, on the Power Grid Project, and helped to facilitate this workshop and the SAC meeting. Education Unit staff also took the lead in producing the minutes of the SAC meeting and a summary of the main issues raised at the community and Environmental Justice Workshop.

**Web Site:** Education Unit staff and a consultant have finished restructuring and updating the California EMF Program's Web Site. The content of the site is undergoing a final review, and the new material should be on line by the beginning of December. After the restructured site replaces the old site on line, we will begin converting more draft and final program projects into a form that can be posted on the site.

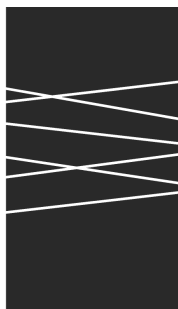
**Responses to Public Questions:** The Education Unit has responded to over a dozen questions from members of the public each week over the past two months. Many of the questions were from Southern California Edison customers who had recently received their annual bill insert on EMF, and got our telephone number from there. Other questions came to us through e-mail from visitors to our Web site. As usual, the questions ranged over a variety of subjects, from EMF from power lines to EMF from electric blankets and other appliances to electrical hypersensitivity and other issues.

**Other Recent Activities:** Education Unit staff have also taken the lead on revising the California EMF Program report to the CPUC, and continue to be involved in planning the schedules for completing various program products. We also produce the EMF Program newsletter, and support the research unit as required.

## EMF PROGRAM STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

	(510)			(510)	
Raymond Neutra	622-4905	rneutra@dhs.ca.gov	Jack Collins	622-4431	emfadmin@dnai.com
Alvin Leonard	622-4432	alvinleonard@yahoo.com	Maria Giron	622-4433	mlgiron@netscape.net
Vincent Del Pizzo	622-4418	delpizzo@yahoo.com	Cherry Elliott	622-4434	emf@dnai.com
Geraldine Lee	622-5091	gerrilee17@yahoo.com	Webb Sprague	622-4500	emf@dnai.com
Jessica Hecht	622-4430	jhecht@dhs.ca.gov			
		main phone (510) 622-4500, fax (510) 622-4505			

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### California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program

A project of the California Department of Health Services and the Public Health Institute  
Elihu Harris State Office Building  
1515 Clay St., 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612